



...Alabama Fatherhood Initiative (AFI) Quarterly Newsletter - Fall 2003

INTRODUCING THE ALABAMA FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE (AFI) NEWSLETTER

*This is the **FIRST** issue of the Alabama Fatherhood Initiative Newsletter. It is sponsored and published by the Alabama Department of Human Resources and will be distributed quarterly to AFI member agencies and organizations. To submit fatherhood information to the Newsletter, call 256-340-5996. The next issue will be mailed in February, 2004.*

THE AFI SHORT-TERM TRAINING PILOT PROGRAM IS ASSISTING FATHERS

*In September 2002, many AFI members participated in work groups to design a Model for non-custodial parents to participate in short-term skills training at selected two year college campuses. **Just a year later, this Model has been implemented successfully at Gadsden State Community College, Gadsden State - Ayers Campus and Northwest Shoals Community College.** Several other community colleges are in various stages of implementation. Non-custodial parents that are unable to make child support payments due to unemployment or underemployment are referred to the pilot programs by the child support courts.*

In Etowah County nearly 50 non-custodial parents have been helped with short-term skills training and/or employment and child support payments have increased. In Calhoun County, the program has received about 40 non-custodial parents to assist. The newest program is in Lauderdale County where 12 non-custodial parents have been referred to Northwest Shoals Community College for short-term skills training and many others have found employment through the Easter Seals WiW Tracks Program.

The short-term skills training courses are funded with WiW dollars appropriated to the Pilot Project by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs and with TANF dollars from the Alabama Department of Human Resources, Family Assistance Partnership.

Out-of-wedlock childbearing has now overtaken divorce as the primary cause of father absence. The National Fatherhood Initiative

CHILDREN OF PRISONERS MENTORING GRANT AWARDED TO THE ALABAMA ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE

*On October 3, 2003 HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson announced nearly \$9 million in grants to 52 organizations to train adult volunteers as mentors to children whose parents are incarcerated. **One of the largest grants was awarded to the Alabama Attorney General's Office.** These grants are part of President Bush's plan to provide mentors for disadvantaged youth to help them as they grow into adulthood.*

According to Secretary Thompson, between 1991 and 1999, the number of children with a parent in a federal or state correctional facility increased by more than 100 percent, from about 900,000 to about 2,000,000; fewer than 50 percent of prisoners receive regular visits from their children, either because the children's caregiver chooses not to visit or because the distance is prohibitive; and studies show that children with incarcerated parents have a seven times greater chance than the general population to become incarcerated themselves.

THE CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND FATHERHOOD GRANTEES ARE ANNOUNCED

*In October 03 the Children's Trust Fund of Alabama announced it's Fatherhood Program grantees for FY 03-04. **Over 800 thousand TANF dollars transferred to CTF by the Alabama Department of Human Resources was awarded to 38 fatherhood programs in each of the seven congressional districts.** Visit the CTF web site, www.ctf.state.al.us, for information about the CTF grantees for FY 03-04.*

OTHER FATHERHOOD HAPPENINGS

The State Department of Human Resources web site now has a web page about the DHR Fatherhood Initiatives with links to the Child Support Enforcement and Family Assistance programs web pages. The Child Support Enforcement Program web page has a new online Child Support Manual and a Voice Response system for inquiry regarding child support payments. The web site address for these features is www.dhr.state.al.us.

State DHR has developed an Alabama Fatherhood Resource Directory made possible by TANF federal funds. It will be circulated among the AFI network for distribution to non-custodial parents. The Directory pulls together the fatherhood programs and services administered by AFI member agencies and organizations. Look for this publication after Christmas.